

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In the Office Action mailed October 20, 2005, dependent Claims 2 and 3 were objected to as lacking clear antecedent basis. In addition, independent Claim 1 and dependent Claims 2 and 5-11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,090,279 to Wasko in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,922,761 to Schwendt. The Examiner kindly suggested that dependent Claims 3 and 4 would be allowable if rewritten into independent form.

In response, Applicants have amended independent Claim 1 and dependent Claims 2-5, 8, and 11 and have cancelled dependent Claim 6. Following these amendments, Claims 1-5 and 7-11 remain pending in the application. The objection to dependent Claims 2 and 3 and the rejection of Claims 1-2, 5, and 7-11 are addressed below.

Objection to Dependent Claims 2 and 3

The Examiner objected to dependent Claims 2 and 3, asserting that the use of the term "ribs" lacked clear antecedent basis because "the term can refer to the ribs of either the inside or outside portion." See Office Action, page 2. To provide clear antecedent basis for the term "ribs" and put the claims in condition for allowance, dependent Claims 2 and 3 have been amended to clarify the portion (i.e., the inside portion and/or the outside portion) to which the ribs cited therein belong. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the objection to dependent Claims 2 and 3 for lack of antecedent basis be withdrawn.

Rejection of Independent Claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Independent Claim 1 has been rejected as being unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) in light of U.S. Patent No. 4,090,279 to Wasko ("*Wasko*") in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,922,761 to Schwendt ("*Schwendt*"). Independent Claim 1 has been amended to recite that the outside reinforcement portion is connected to the inside reinforcement portion on an opposite side of the separable bottom end stop, and the outside reinforcement portion comprises a frame and plural ribs disposed in the frame and extending toward an outer edge of one of the fastener tapes in parallel with a predetermined interval. These features are not disclosed or suggested in *Wasko* and *Schwendt*. Accordingly, because the prior art does not disclose each and every element of independent Claim 1 as amended, Applicants respectfully assert that independent Claim 1 is patentable over the prior art.

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Rejection of Dependent Claims 2, 5, and 7-11 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Dependent Claims 2, 5, and 7-11 depend from independent Claim 1 and therefore include all the limitations of independent Claim 1 plus additional features that further define over the prior art. Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above in regard to independent Claim 1, Applicants respectfully assert that dependent Claims 2, 5, and 7-11 are also patentable over the prior art.

It is not believed that extensions of time or fees for net addition of claims are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in documents accompanying this paper. However, in the event that additional extensions of time are necessary to allow consideration of this paper, such extensions are hereby petitioned under 37 CFR § 1.136(a), and any fee required therefore (including fees for net addition of claims) is hereby authorized to be charged to Deposit Account No. 16-0605.

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's careful consideration of this application and would welcome a telephone conference with the Examiner to expedite the processing of the patent application. Applicant's attorney, Meredith Struby, may be reached directly at (404) 881-4626.

Respectfully submitted,

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